

Message Text

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ACTION EA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY MANILA

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INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON

CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L MANILA 10240

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: OVIP, RP, TH

SUBJECT: KUKRIT VISIT A SUCCESS

CINCPAC FO POLAD

SUMMARY: THAI PRIMIN KUKRIT'S JULY 21-24 VISIT HELPED STRENGTHEN ONE OF MORE AMORPHOUS OF BILATERAL LINKS IN ASEAN. ALTHOUGH IT DID NOT TOTALLY OVERCOME RELATIVELY LONG PERIOD OF NEGLECT AND, ON PART OF PHILIPPINES, DEGREE OF DISDAIN, IT PROBABLY ESTABLISHED BASIS FOR MUTUAL RESPECT OF TWO LEADERS, EXPOSED IDENTITY OF CONCERNS ASIAN-WIDE, AND CONTRIBUTED TO DEVELOPMENT OF COMMON POSITIONS THAT SEEM FAIRLY WELL ROOTED IN REASONABLY SIMILAR PERCEPTIONS OF AREA PROBLEMS. VIST MOVED SEATO ONE MORE STEP TOWARDS ITS DEMISE. IT SUGGESTED SINSE OF GREATER MOMENTUM ON EVENTUAL PHASING OUT OF U.S. BASES IN PHILIPPINES. IT ALSO STRENGTHENED COMMIT-
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MENT OF TWO LEADERS TO ASEAN AS BOTH POLITICAL (INCLUDING

SECURITY) AND ECONOMIC ENTITY IN LIGHT OF RISE OF PRC
AND NVN. END SUMMARY.

2. WE UNDERSTAND GOP IMPRESSED BY KUKRIT. IT NOTED FACT HE
CALLED THE SHOTS AND DID NOT RELY ON ADVISORS. GOP ALSO
FOUND HIM SURPRISINGLY "CONSERVATIVE" (APPARENTLY STILL BE-
LIEVING THAT THAI STUDENTS DETERMINED GOVERNMENT MAKE UP).
BOTH ASPECTS OF KUKRIT NO DOUBT APPRECIATED BY MARCOS, AND
CONTRIBUTED TO MUTUAL RESPECT.

3. MOST IMPORTANT TOPIC FOR DISCUSSION BY TWO LEADERS WAS
CHANGED SITUATION IN ASIA, STEPS TWO GOVERNMENTS HAD AL-
READY TAKEN, AND THOSE THEY MIGHT TAKE TOGETHER IN FUTURE.
COMMUNIQUE RECORDS PRIMARY FOCI OF TALKS AND REFLECTS SUB-
STANTIAL DEGREE OF AGREEMENT OR AT LEAST TOLERANCE OF THE
OTHER'S PRIORITY INTERESTS.
FOLLOWING COMMENT KEYED TO COMMUNIQUE:

(A) EXPANDING RELATIONS WITHOUT REGARD TO IDEOLOGY.
THIS IS GOP FORMULATION INTENDED TO CONVEY POST-VIENAM
FLEXIBILITY IN DEALING WITH ALL COUNTRIES. LINKED AS IT
IS IN COMMUNIQUE TO STRESS ON NON-INTERFERENCE, HOWEVER,
IT IS CLEARLY CAUTIONARY PRELUDE TO EFFORTS OF BOTH
COUNTRIES TO ASSESS FUTURE ACTIONS OF PRC AND SUBSTANCE
OF EACH OTHER'S RELATIONSHIP WITH PRC. WE THINK THEY
REASSURED EACH OTHER ABOUT THE SOBRIETY OF THEIR APPROACH
TO THE PRC, AGREED ON THE NEED TO STAY ALERT, BUT SUS-
PECT THAT KUKRIT'S ACCOUNT OF HIS SUCCESSES IN PEKING DID
NOT ALLAY GOP'S DEEP SEATED CONCERN ABOUT ULTIMATE
CHINA INTENTIONS.

(B) ASEAN. JUXTAPOSITION OF ASEAN TO PRC IN COM-
MUNIQUE UNDERLINES FACT (1) PRC IS MOST IMPORTANT NEW
FACTOR IN THEIR VIEW FOR SOUTHEAST ASIANS TO DEAL WITH
(NO REFERENCE TO DISCUSSIONS ABOUT USSR), (2) HIGHLIGHTS
THEIR CONCLUSION THEY MUST DEAL WITH PRC COLLECTIVELY AND
(3) THAT ASEAN, ESSENTIALLY AS NOW CONSTITUTED, IS BEST
COLLECTIVE INSTRUMENT AVAILABLE. ALTHOUGH KUKRIT AND
MARCOS SOUNDED SOMEWHAT VARIANT NOTES AT OUTSET OF TALKS
ON ASEAN, KUKRIT EMPHASIZING SECURITY AND MARCOS A COMMON
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MARKET, THEIR JOINT AGREEMENT ON PUSHING TREATY OF AMITY
AND COOPERATION IS REASONABLE AND POSSIBLY SIGNIFICANT
COMPROMISE. (TREATY PROPOSES EXPLICIT POLITICAL ROLE FOR
ASEAN, INCORPORATING BOTH SECURITY AND ECONOMIC ASPECTS
IN ARTICLES 7, 11 AND 12.) PHILIPPINES PREDICTABLY EM-
PHASIZED AT CONCLUSION OF VISIT "HARMONIZATION OF AGRI-
CULTURAL AND INDUSTRIAL POLICIES" INCLUDING ESTABLISHMENT
OF CUSTOMS UNION BUT THIS PRESUMABLY DOES NOT VITIATE

GOP ENDORSEMENT OF TREATY.

(C) INDOCHINA. PUTTING INDOCHINA AFTER DISCUSSIONS OF THE ASEAN AND WITH PARTICULAR STRESS ON "STRICT ADHERENCE" TO "PEACEFUL CO-EXISTENCE" AND "NON-INTERFERENCE" INDICATIVE OF CONCERN OF BOTH LEADERS ABOUT NVN INTENTIONS. IT PRESUMABLY REFLECTS THAI DECISION TO PIN ITS SECURITY HOPES ON PRC AND ALSO SIGNALS FACT THAT GOP HAS DOWNGRADED ITS OWN EFFORTS TO ACCOMMODATE NVN. (IT IS ALSO POSSIBLE THIS REFERS TO MALAYSIA INTERVENTION IN THEIR MUSLIM COMMUNITIES. WE HAVE SEEN NO INDICATION THIS DISCUSSED BUT WE DOUBT AT LEAST THAT MARCOS WOULD ALLOW OPPORTUNITY TO SLIP BY WITHOUT DISCUSSING BIGGEST PROBLEM HE HAS).

(D) BASES. TWO GOVERNMENTS APPARENTLY STRETCHED ON THIS ITEM TO REFLECT FACT TWO COUNTRIES HAVE DIFFERENT TIME TABLE RE BASES. WE UNDERSTAND THAT THEY AGREED TO FALL BACK ON 1967 PATTHYA RESOLUTION TO PROVIDE ADEQUATE FLEXIBILITY FOR EACH OTHER'S POSITION. KUKRIT MADE CLEAR SEPARATELY THAT HE INTERESTED ONLY IN U.S. LEAVING THAILAND MARCH 1976 WHEREAS MARCOS INDICATED HE DID NOT REQUIRE U.S. LEAVE PHILIPPINE SO LONG AS IT ACCEPTED PHILIPPINE JURISDICTION. PRESS SECRETARY TATAD'S USE OF "FEW YEARS" IN PRESS BRIEFING (MANILA 10154) TENDED TO CREATE IMPRESSION OF SQUARING PHILIPPINE POSITION WITH COMMUNIQUE'S USE OF "TEMPORARY" BUT TERM "FEW YEARS" WAS NOT, SO FAR AS WE KNOW, PART OF DISCUSSIONS BETWEEN TWO LEADERS.

(E) SEATO. TWO GOVERNMENTS DISCUSSED THIS THOROUGHLY. ALTHOUGH FORMULA THAT IT SHOULD BE "PHASED OUT" SUGGESTS THAT PHILIPPINES WON COMMUNIQUE BATTLE, WE THINK LITERAL INTENT IS SOMEWHAT DIFFERENT. MARCOS ADDED ORAL CAVEAT THAT ACTION SHOULD TAKE PLACE ONLY "AS CIRCUMSTANCES OCCUR" CONFIDENTIAL

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AND KUKRIT REPORTEDLY TOLD PRESS CONFERENCE THAT THE FUTURE OF SEATO MIGHT BE DECIDED BY AN ASEAN SUMMIT MEETING IN DECEMBER "AT THE EARLIEST". EVEN IF SEATO ORGANIZATION DESBANDED, HE SAID, MANILA TREATY WOULD REMAIN. SUBSEQUENT INTERPRETATIVE STATEMENTS BY MARCOS AND KUKRIT--WHICH REPRESENT ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF IMPORTANCE OF SEATO TO THAIS AS ITS ONLY TREATY LINK WITH U.S.-- DO NOT, HOWEVER, UNDO IMPRESSION THAT SEATO HAS SLIPPED ONE MORE STEP. SUBSEQUENT PHILIPPINE PRESS COMMENTARY STRESSING PHASE OUT, AND REPORTED ENDORSEMENT TO MARCOS BY VISITING AUSTRALIAN PARLIAMENTARIANS OF THIS TREND, CONFIRM THAT DRIFT. (SO FAR AS WE KNOW, GOP HAS NOT GIVEN MUCH THOUGHT PRESERVATION OF MANILA TREATY AS OPPOSED TO SEATO ORGANIZATION.)

4. WE THINK KUKRIT AND MARCOS GOT GOOD AND FAVORABLE MEASURE OF EACH OTHER AS LEADERS AND THAT THEIR DISCUSSIONS HELPED BOTH TO ENLIGHTEN AND TO REASSURE EACH OTHER ABOUT THEIR ABILITY TO COPE WITH DEVELOPMENTS IN ASIA. ALTHOUGH MARCOS MAY NOT REGARD FUTURE OF KUKRIT AS VERY BRIGHT, THE SUBSTANTIAL AGREEMENT THAT THEY APPEAR TO HAVE ACHIEVED IN THEIR PERCEPTION OF THE PROBLEMS AHEAD HAS UNDOUBTEDLY HELPED STABILIZE MARCOS' VIEWS. THEIR AGREEMENT ON EXPANDING ASEAN, ALTHOUGH PREDICTABLE, IS A CONSTRUCTIVE RESPONSE TO A PROBLEM THAT MAY HELP INCH ALONG RESPONSIBLE REGIONALISM. THEIR TALKS ON SEATO APPEAR TO HAVE ADDED TO IMPRESSION ORGANIZATION IS ON THE SKIDS, DESPITE SOMEWHAT STUDIED AMBIGUITY ON TIMING. HANDLING OF U.S. BASES ISSUE NOT QUITE SO DIRE GIVEN FACT THAT INTENDED DEPARTURE OF U.S. MILITARY FROM THAILAND ALREADY WELL KNOWN, BUT IT DID EMPHASIZE CONSTRAINTS ON CONTINUATION OF U.S. BASES IN AREA AND SPECIFICALLY IN PHILIPPINES.
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